

Misfitz Because

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**What Doesn't Belong—and Why?
Mind-Teasers!**

Eliot Plum

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LIVE BRAVE.

MISFITZ BECAUSE: What Doesn't Belong—and Why? Mind-Teasers!

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This edition contains an additional illustration, on page 106, but other than revising the text under the illustration and referring to my mom by name, Sylvia, this book contains no revisions to the text.

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Special thank you to copyeditor Laura Dawn Middleton.
Not that we haven't missed something—let us know.


BOOK WRITTEN, CREATED, DESIGNED, AND PRODUCED BY JEF7REY HILDNER

for my mom, Sylvia



the third shape from the top doesn't fit because straight lines form the others

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INTRO

What doesn't belong and why?

- apple
- peach
- truck
- grape

What could be simpler: truck—because the others are fruit.

How about:

- purple
- red
- yellow
- blue

Slightly harder, right? If you haven't brushed up on color theory, you might have to stop to think about this one for a second. And say you zero in on "purple"—perhaps a hunch? But *why* "purple"? Because this isn't simply a multiple-choice situation like those standardized tests we all took in high school. Just circling one of the four choices won't get you anywhere. You have to explain *why* one of the four choices doesn't fit.

Answer? Purple—because the others are primary colors (on the traditional color wheel that artists use), but purple is a secondary color.

Now try this one:

- uncle
- leave
- asphalt
- waffle

That's the humdinger that triggered this book. And the quartet awaits you on page 46: F50. My mom, Sylvia, stumped me with it. She had watched a rerun of the 1970's TV series *Columbo*, and Columbo (Peter Falk) was testing his wits against that week's villain: a smooth operator who belonged to the International High IQ Society, better known as Mensa.

And the man from Mensa tossed that riddle Columbo's way. Which, of course, as my mom tells it, Columbo naturally solved at the end of the show after nailing the Mensa perp. You can just see Columbo's classic move: the false exit—heading for the door then turning and saying, "Just one more thing. You know that mind teaser you asked me about? Well, I think the answer is" And he not only has the answer, but slam dunks it with the reason. Revealing what TV viewers know, but the villain underestimates: The fumbling Columbo may appear disheveled and slow, but his genius for solving riddles can match a Mensa member any day!

Uncle, Leave, Asphalt, Waffle? Yikes. Took me a couple days to unpack that quartet. Mom gave me hints along the way by answering my yes-and-no questions and giving me an analogy or two to nudge me in the right direction. But no wonder it took me so long: The solution to the puzzle hinged on something I didn't know.

But I really liked the core concept of that *Columbo* show puzzle, and I really liked the questions-and-answers journey. So Mom and I started making up our own puzzles, and a little later down the road, I decided to call our game, "Misfitz Because."

The best puzzles that Mom and I made up were so clever and fun that we couldn't typically solve them without each other's help. (Which made the game a "party" game—a game you do with other people.) The most fun puzzles tested more than our knowledge—our analytical or "vertical thinking." Which is what the "purple, red, yellow, blue" puzzle tests. The most fun puzzles tested what creativity-expert Edward de Bono calls our "lateral thinking"—our creative thinking. And that's the only way to grok the head-scratcher "Uncle, Leave, Asphalt, Waffle."

For Mom and me, half the fun of our new mind-teaser game came down to devising sharp, puzzle-cracking questions. We didn't put any limit on the number of these yes-or-no questions. And, two peas in a pod, we both stuck to a "don't tell me, because I want to figure this out" attitude. No matter how long it takes. So we never felt defeated. Dumb and dense sometimes, yes—but never defeated. Whether solving the puzzle took two minutes or two days (allowing for "step-back" time), we just hung in there till we cracked the case. And when our yes-and-no questions couldn't break through, we'd ask for a hint. And so I'd offer Mom a well-considered hint that wouldn't tip her off to the answer too quickly, but would help her reframe the situation in a slightly different way and get her wheels turning in a positive direction. And she'd do the same for me. (We'd often have several puzzles going at the same time.) As we stayed with each puzzle, hints became gradually more helpful, building on the insights revealed by the yes-or-no questions, until the one solving the puzzle would finally reach that palm-to-forehead "eureka!" moment, laugh, and get the answer.

Sometimes a puzzle allows for more than one answer. But the game requires that you find the answer the puzzle-designer has in mind.

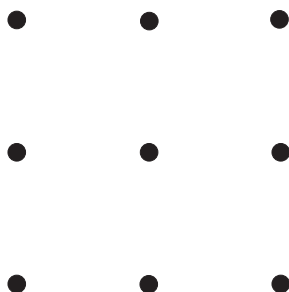
Here's an example:

- olive
- fig
- peach
- grape

Now you might pick “fig,” because the others have five letters, but fig has only three letters. And you’d be right: That’s a valid solution. But it’s only a superficial solution, because there’s a better reason that one of the four items doesn’t fit. This tough, “vertical thinking” puzzle demands that you dig deeper. And know more! (You’ll find a variation of this example on page 55: S52.)

I organized the puzzles in this book along the lines of *The New York Times* daily crossword puzzles, which become increasingly harder during the week—ranging from easy puzzles on Monday to give-me-a-break hilariously hard puzzles on Saturday, with Sunday offering a mixed bag. In this book, expect even Monday’s puzzles to get progressively harder. “Lateral thinking” puzzles don’t kick in until Tuesday. And from that point on, the puzzles continue to emphasize “lateral thinking,” gaining in difficulty from one day to the next, but also with “vertical thinking” puzzles sprinkled in as the week unfolds.

When it comes to understanding the difference between “vertical thinking” and “lateral thinking,” maybe the best analogy I can give you is the nine-dot problem on the next



page.

TEST 1: Vertical, Inside-the-Box Thinking—Connect those nine dots using *five lines* without lifting your pencil.

TEST 2: Lateral, Outside-the-Box Thinking—Connect those nine dots using *four lines* without lifting your pencil.

Connecting with five lines? Simple. But with four lines? That might stump you for a while. (Answer on page 102.)

Mom and I no longer play the game together. She’s having a rough go healthwise. But friends have recently joined me in learning the game. We played Misfitz Because through our last New Year’s Eve party, and we now all cook up puzzles and e-mail them to each other.

You can join in and have fun, too, as both puzzle solver and puzzle creator. I’ve left lots of white space throughout the book so you can noodle on answers and devise your own Misfitz Because puzzles. What you see here only hints at the countless possible types and degree-of-difficulty levels

you can explore.

So put on your Misfitz Because hat, and jump in. A good way to play the game is to have somebody serve as facilitator. In fact, appointing a facilitator may well be the only way to unriddle many, if not most, of these stumpers! If you try together with a partner or group to work out a puzzle in this book, the facilitator can look at the answer and serve as the hint-giver, slowly reeling you in through answers to your yes-or-no questions and the facilitator's more complex hints.

I'm told that *Sesame Street* fans will recognize Misfitz Because as a version of "Which of these things is not like the other things?" Also, my editor and I recently heard a Saturday radio show where the host asked a group of guests to puzzle through which item of a foursome didn't fit. "They're playing Misfitz Because!" my editor exclaimed while I pumped gas at a Gulf station. "They just did one about four obscure names, and the contestants had to figure out that only one of the four people on the list appeared as a Munchkin in the 1939 *Wizard of Oz* in both the black-and-white AND color parts of the movie. The other three people on the list appeared as Munchkins only in the black-and-white parts of the movie. No way the contestants could have done it without hints from the host."

First, holy smokes! Talk about trivia! None of the puzzles in this book are harder than that one.

Second, that puzzle emphasizes not only what unifies the three items that fit together, but also emphasizes something meaningful about the misfit—often the case with such "vertical thinking" puzzles, even in this book. "Lateral thinking" puzzles, on the other hand, tend to emphasize *only* what unifies the three elements that do fit together—offering up the misfit as simply an attractive distraction, or red herring.

Third, hmmm . . . well, I never claimed to invent the basic concept or game. (*Columbo*'s writers did!) I've just given my own name to it: Misfitz Because.

Oh, the answer to the *Columbo* Mensa riddle? Check out Friday. The last one. In fact, everything you need to solve it you'll have learned by working out all the other puzzles that precede it.

As you play Misfitz Because, I hope you have as much fun as Mom and I did.



Play it straight.

M1

shoe
fork
pants
ties

M2

auditorium
bedroom
living room
kitchen

M3

♣
♥
♪
♠

M4

knight
rook
herald
bishop

M5

Marlins
Eagles
Giants
Rockies

M6

Lincoln
Adams
Polk
Franklin

M7

CNN
IBM
ESPN
LMN

M8

Frankfort
Alexandria
Trenton
Salem

M9

Indian
Cowboy
Pacific
Atlantic

M10

Milton Bradley
Parker Brothers
Hasbro
Craftsman

M11

orange
purple
blue
green

M12

Andrew
Lawrence
Nathaniel
Philip

M13

California
Bermuda
Vermont
Alabama

M14

Montreal
Quebec
Manitoba
Ontario

M15

...
i
:
?

M16

Princeton
Dartmouth
Stanford
Cornell

M17

Kenya
Columbia
Ecuador
Bolivia

M18

mi
la
tu
fa

M19

Mozart
Picasso
Beethoven
Wagner

M20

nimbus
cumulus
cirrus
rhombus

M21

Fan Tan
Duet
Crazy Eights
Hearts

M22

Braves
Red Sox
Celtics
Bruins

M23

jade
sapphire
opal
diamond

M24

5
9
17
11

M25

Paul
Tom
John
George

M26

Chernobyl
Three Mile Island
Fukushima
Katrina

M27

French Open
Australian Open
The Masters
Wimbledon

M28

Dr. Seuss
Maurice Sendak
Madeleine L'Engle
Katherine Hepburn

M29

Antietam
Lexington
Gettysburg
Shiloh

M30

Green Eggs and Ham
If I Ran the Zoo
Daisy-Head Mayzie
Tomatoes and Moons

M31

wool
cotton
leather
silk

M32

Fiat
Maserati
Lotus
Lamborghini

M33

neon
nylon
radon
krypton

M34

Raphael
Leonardo
Stravinsky
Michaelangelo

M35

Rolex
Spandex
Kleenex
Windex

M36

copper
tin
nickle
steel

M37

Coming to America
Beverly Hills Cop
Trading Places
Groundhog Day

M38

§
 ¥
 €
 £

M39

A.I. Artificial Intelligence
The Terminator
Aliens
Avatar

M40

Herman Melville
 Nathaniel Hawthorne
 George Eliot
 Ralph Waldo Emerson

M41

Oriental
 Tennessee
 Texas
 Pacific

M42

The Prince and the Pauper
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Uncle Tom's Cabin

M43

Jackson
 Adams
 Jefferson
 Van Buren

M44

The Wizard of Oz
Gone With the Wind
Young Mr. Lincoln
Batman Begins

M45

Walt Disney
 John Wesley
 Joseph Smith
 Mary Baker Eddy

M46

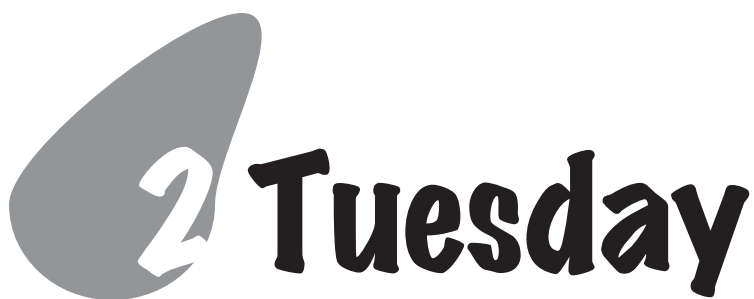
trumpet
 violin
 mandoline
 flute

M47

Cesar
 Merlot
 Giró
 Baroque

M48

cucumber
 tomato
 radish
 avocado



OK. Now think differently.

T1

line
boat
storm
rod

T2

apple
corn
cane
fiber

T3

stone
clip
route
bag

T4

flash
back
moon
toe

T5

mill
candy
whiskey
gin

T6

dream
night
light
time

T7

cat
dog
trap
gun

T8

weed
kid
coast
man

T9

bolt
bird
cloud
peg

T10

fun
man
ball
shoe

T11

straw
black
plate
blue

T12

ground
hedge
sail
wart

T13

snow
chalk
surf
wave

T14

stream
space
sleek
speed

T15

blue
green
black
red

T16

bird
flax
hay
fence

T17

coral
aqua
lemon
orange

T18

fire
dark
sound
light

T19

paper
dead
sad
counter

T20

chess
skate
poker
score

T21

sing
team
play
ship

T22

back
down
sand
sound

T23

bread
snap
root
blend

T24

face
word
name
book

T25

back
post
size
up

T26

out
in
house
help

T27

water
bow
wear
ice

T28

fool
bomb
wire
crush

T29

planet
star
steam
battle

T30

snow
rain
black
white

T31

drag
comic
landing
watch

T32

nip
walk
fly
fish

T33

paper
torn
master
busy

T34

land
board
scape
stage

T35

barn
brick
tile
boat

T36

license
hot
home
breeze

T37

crime
club
time
shirt

T38

rights
words
marriage
law

T39

washer
dryer
water
rag

T40

third
cut
first
chop

T41

store
dog
lamb
farm

T42

talk
guard
forward
track

T43

trust
leaf
road
news

T44

bike
disk
line
four-wheel

T45

air
play
up
tune

T46

wood
chair
dish
street

T47

ship
fly
junk
church

T48

traveler
order
reporter
tennis



Wednesday

Step it up. They get harder.

W1

brass
notch
straw
dog

W2

lead
spoon
lining
bullet

W3

onion
rice
omelet
waffle

W4

streak
light
winds
skies

W5

tree
carpet
ink
tape

W6

salty
green
black
early

W7

cheap
high
big
last

W8

duck
even
heat
water

W9

cold
all
done
bare

W10

oil
grass
race
court

W11

Mansion
King
Hut
Factory

W12

bottom
tore
red
plugged

W13

lake
beach
weapon
battle

W14

hand
wave
force
spoon

W15

hand
sky
ghost
pin

W16

box
stick
gear
lock

W17

line
run
square
lap

W18

nut
guest
friend
hen

W19

chip
card
mob
flood

W20

screw
odd
bum
goof

W21

toad
fist
bull
prize

W22

print
cafe
wire
woman

W23

confidence
straw
front
decision

W24

horn
beam
dressing
fry

W25

ice
type
slope
flag

W26

hour
heaven
fiddle
fake

W27

days
oaths
sense
nap

W28

dark
dumb
sandy
eager

W29

cars
tooth
grapes
pill

W30

talk
air
service
cushion

W31

dollar
guinea
lone
road

W32

blind
broken
turtle
puppy

W33

ship
wait
test
railroad

W34

down
around
gray
away

W35

muffin
college
town
pie

W36

jail
snow
love
hatch

W37

over
interference
ceremony
ball

W38

tires
papers
slip
boot

W39

blood
matter
atom
thumb

W40

weasel
hoof
ear
rat

W41

apple
yogurt
cheese
banana

W42

wolf
tail
antler
possum

W43

free
seat
train
ticket

W44

left
home
heavy
steer

W45

feathers
elephant
zebras
business

W46

under
worked
smoking
jump

W47

waffle
bacon
toast
cereal

W48

pajamas
meow
claw
whiskers



Thursday

Harder yet.

Thursday

4

answers on
pages 78-79

TH1

moon
lamp
dice
bottle

TH2

rake
bucket
dust
ghost

TH3

quiet
scared
miffed
sick

TH4

tart
creek
lunch
fence

TH5

napkin
throat
bonnet
back

TH6

punches
flows
tide
ball

TH7

heels
mules
horses
pants

TH8

fat
cud
bone
rag

TH9

sacred
church
black
night

TH10

black
red
corner
picture

TH11

strong
stubborn
fuzzy
sly

TH12

gloves
line
shoes
tightrope

TH13

bat
ball
lamb
cat

TH14

bridge
damn
back
side

TH15

cake
park
sailing
cooking

TH16

hatchet
toaster
bullet
music

TH17

eat
hate
hungry
like

TH18

late
short
night
day

TH19

wax
wings
match
yards

TH20

angle
tree
buck
gun

Thursday

4

answers on
pages 80-81

TH21

water
dune
roof
shop

TH22

arm's
bobs
length
keep

TH23

magenta
chartreuse
pink
marigold

TH24

syndrome
standoff
cheese
cherry

TH25

tired
drunk
fat
happy

TH26

lime
sand
sky
head

TH27

wheel
dance
ship
play

TH28

π
 $\sqrt{2}$
 9^3
 ϕ

TH29

sip
air
crash
praise

TH30

door
cuff
bean
steam

TH31

chair
bad
couch
cold

TH32

burp
punch
nosedive
raincheck

TH33

Tadpole
Sturgeon
Harvest
Beaver

TH34

boat
worms
cart
sad

TH35

sad
cent
day
district

TH36

pickle
egg
beet
milk

TH37

sleeve
ends
cucumber
raspberry

TH38

injury
logs
flames
nest

TH39

toes
peeled
dipped
ground

TH40

door
brine
water
belt

TH41

pilcrow
viceroi
solidus
bang

TH42

beat
puddle
chomp
saddle

TH43

whip
blanket
parade
dry

TH44

donut
fruitcake
belfry
deck

TH45

feeds
chew
head
bottoms

TH46

back
down
row
horse

TH47

fire
grinds
knife
wounds

TH48

spade
table
chest
rake

TH49

wilts
handle
pants
coop

TH50

ointment
wall
fly
grope

TH51

Light in August
As I Lay Dying
To the Lighthouse
Intruder in the Dust

TH56

C
Q
M
Y

TH52

Stardust Memories
Annie Hall
Celebrity
Manhattan

TH57

Galilee
Black
Caspian
Salton

TH53

bull
aim
shaggy
fish

TH58

Candy
Snoopy
Ford
Garfield

TH54

John Young
Alan Shepard
David Scott
Neil Armstrong

TH59

Rose Finn Apple
Sunset Scotch Fig
Russian Banana
Austrian Crescent

TH55

Monet
Seurat
Van Gogh
Pissarro

TH60

Julia Morgan
Jennifer Bartlett
Zaha Hadid
Eileen Gray



Black Diamond slope.

Friday

answers on
pages 84-85

F1

swat
save
bring
fry

F2

fish
petal
color
cat

F3

ear
eggs
smokes
drink

F4

pine
fence
ham
truck

F5

Sunday
Monday
under
other

F6

cleaners
woodshed
swing
wing

F7

create
shuffle
cracks
carpet

F8

curve
press
seam
seem

F9

caboodle
eights
yards
wax

F10

courage
shame
treat
wife

F11

group
trees
round
evil

F12

mouth
stream
pipe
horse

F13

drummer
tide
glue
cloth

F14

block
shoulder
bargaining
windy

F15

fish
muff
take
switch

F16

sure as God
leaf times
oranges
apples!

F17

low-grade
wave
pastry
fire drill

F18

wool
rug
plug
splint

F19

mine
horns
eye
shoot

F20

let
down
tights
chips

F21

tree
barrel
roasts
apples

F22

Long Nights
Buck
Wolf
Snow

F23

soapstone
nighthawk
peach
ham

F24

olive
slate
vermilion
russet

F25

Io
Callisto
Triton
Ganymede

F26

weed
fist
glove
ceiling

F27

lost
force
deal
stop

F28

moose
day
curiosity
gander

F29

knees
bees
deck
down

F30

dog
glove
show
tail

F31

lettuce
iceberg
tongue
hand

F32

oatmeal
henhouse
horse
wild

F33

closet
folder
bag
beans

F34

pay
chin
job
leg

F35

gifts
dusts
buyer
clothing

F36

island
skip
alone
find

F37

blank
place
thread
wall

F38

horn
fiddle
oboe
drum

F39

glory
daisies
tropic
under

F40

mouth
trot
swine
hatch

F41

hat
bag
word
grab

F42

kick
armed
skin
pine

F43

nose
hoof
crawl
skin

F44

music
sword
organ
piper

F45

words
link
spy
neighbors

F46

home
scorned
woman
tipsy

F47

Perseus
Theseus
Minos
Daedalus

F48

hot
fire
cafe
kitchen

F49

ties
ropes
ball
out

F50

uncle
leave
asphalt
waffle



Ouch.

S1

next
punched
Maker
last

S2

go
pardon
slow
joke

S3

bread
paper
wax
dough

S4

flashlight
bread
bulldog
chalk

S5

buff
sage
olive
plum

S6

smoke
play
fight
work

S7

wild
silly
cooked
spied

S8

over
heaven
hell
fly

S9

meal
milk
bank
wolf

S10

drink
think
spots
tricks

S11

throw
guard
whistle
twist

S12

breadth
height
whisker
teeth

S13

pins
pants
crook
door

S14

auction
walls
claw
file

S15

poke
bag
snails
worms

S16

road
boat
oil
time

S17

nothing
keep
longest
tops

S18

around
confound
sow
bell

S19

hand
nose
slippers
bridges

S20

bottles
sheep
basket
water

S21

blow
point
shoot
hoist

S22

horse
around
except
mouth

S23

tan
twins
handshake
summer

S24

pod
cloth
feather
weather

S25

bed
devil
roost
riot

S26

moss
lining
drizzle
mountains

S27

mouse
dog
skin
king

S28

home
face
over
back

S29

closet
private
public
carpet

S30

battered
me
you
vinegar

S31

Sundays
Wednesdays
dog
coon

S32

whispers
practices
autumn
summer

S33

sand
work
dead
trap

S34

room
test
reveals
forgets

S35

duck
toad
money
oil

S36

cure
foolish
rash
pound

S37

blind
all
fonder
lesson

S38

tilt
run
make
dig

S39

man
boats
men
sails

S40

nine
cook
worm
time

S41

face
grace
woe
grow

S42

worm
snake
Virginia
Elizabeth

S43

Sirius
Mintaka
Betelgeuse
Rigel

S44

Pink
Sprouting Grass
Strawberry
Egg

S45

vulnerable years
corn fields
some advice
mind ever since

S46

moon
sea
sky
tree

S47

Omega Centauri
Pegasus
Sculptor
Bode's

S48

doornail
eye
steamboat
sleeve

S49

tulips
heart
times
fall

S50

blows
buried
berries
bedsheets

S51

Portland, Oregon
Omaha, Nebraska
Cincinnati, Ohio
New York, New York

S52

olive
fig
peach
date

S53

feathers
cast
bed
spring

S54

John Marin
Arthur Dove
Thomas Eakins
Rawlston Crawford

S55

Brown Swiss
Albanian
Canadienne
Norwegian Red

S56

Penguins
Knicks
Bruins
Yankees

S57

obelus
colophon
eroteme
asperand

S58

Bill Evans
John Coltrane
Joe Morello
Paul Chambers

S59

heap
layer
thistle
rain

S60

llama
horse
zebra
cow



The kitchen sink.

SN1

sack
tips
Zs
winks

SN2

feed
chicken
shy
hearted

SN3

leg
arms
length
winter

SN4

suit
belt
ante
deck

SN5

horse
fire
giant
toad

SN6

wrench
rope
hammer
dagger

SN7

time
horse
cow
mighty

SN8

book
stomach
belfry
pants

SN9

goose
books
up
frown

SN10

Apache
Iroquois
Pequot
Powhatan

SN11

bread
tea
omelette
juice

SN12

chew
bullet
sail
tongue

SN13

coal mine
fire escapes
headlights
ointment

SN14

April
January
grow
dry

SN15

hind leg
hooks
tough books
crook

SN16

top
down
fuse
on!

SN17

rolling
court
ball
eye

SN18

@

†
}

SN19

oboe
English horn
cornet
saxophone

SN20

up
crossed
tied
clean

SN21

broom
room
grass
hand

SN22

pot
case
cake
stew

SN23

last
neck
kiss
word

SN24

hell
cod
whale
flame

SN25

toads
wolves
something
around

SN26

signals
lights
mirrors
room

SN27

Sundays
age
drone
home

SN28

works
winds
hammock
gauntlet

SN29

fork
itch
sevens
weeds

SN30

press
collar
heels
bulbs

SN31

fort
fire
nose
breath

SN32

grist
put
run
dive

SN33

hotcakes
handle
breaks
seat

SN34

Stagecoach
Drums Along the Mohawk
Young Mr. Lincoln
How Green Was My Valley

SN35

points
robs
sky
dessert

SN36

tv
irons
world
house

SN37

woodwork
side
boils
lakes

SN38

Carnations
Daisies
Roses
Flowers

SN39

elephant
knight
lie
tree

SN40

fur
grease
feathers
sparks

SN41

ice
gas
wheels
pipes

SN42

owl
chase
pickle
cougar

SN43

Glenn Gould
Yo-Yo Ma
Chuck Berry
Blind Willie Johnson

SN44

acorn
rope
tree
end

SN45

tar
road
nest
ruffle

SN46

llama
horse
elephant
giraffe

SN47

burnt
drop
jar
pan

SN48

umbrella
bucket
ointment
something

SN49

walk
dawn
bridge
gun

SN50

handbasket
snowball
water
napkin

SN51

stem
turn
grate
tide

SN52

jack
fry
pond
barrel

SN53

mirrors
fire
it!
type

SN54

Cigar
Worm
Cartwheel
Sunflower

SN55

break
pain
thorn
kick

SN56

God
Sunday
quarterback
shortstop

SN57

Mary Ann Evans
Gertrude Stein
Emily Brontë
Karen Blixen

SN58

lips
ships
storm
loose

SN59

take
drive
spitting
tilting

SN60

Ellery Queen
Lewis Carroll
Mark Twain
Stephen King

answerz



M1

fork

because the others are items you wear, but a fork is a utensil

M2

auditorium

because you'd find the other rooms in a house, but you'd typically find an auditorium only in non-residential buildings

M3

because the other symbols represent suits of cards, but ♪ is a music symbol

M4

herald

because the others are chess pieces

M5

Eagles

because the other pro sports teams are Major League Baseball teams, but the Philadelphia Eagles play in the National Football League

M6

Franklin

because the others were US Presidents

M7

IBM

because the others are cable channels (media companies), but IBM is a computer technology company

M8

Alexandria

because the other US cities are state capitals

M9

Cowboy

because the others are names of oceans

M10

Craftsman

because the others produce board games, but Craftsman manufactures tools

M11

blue

because the others are secondary colors (a mix of equal parts of two primary colors), but blue is a primary color

M12

Lawrence

because the others are names of Jesus' disciples

M13

Bermuda

*because the others are US states, but
Bermuda is a British territory*

M14

Montreal

*because the others are Canadian
provinces, but Montreal is a Canadian city
(in Quebec)*

M15

i

*because the others are punctuation marks,
but "i" is a letter*

M16

Stanford

*because the other universities are members
of the Ivy League, but Stanford is part of
the Pacific-10*

M17

Kenya

*because the other countries are part of
South America, but Kenya is part of Africa*

M18

tu

*because the others are syllables in the
solfege scale (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti)*

M19

Picasso

*because the others were composers, but
Picasso was a painter*

M20

rhombus

*because the others are types of clouds, but
a rhombus is a geometric shape*

M21

Duet

because the others are card games

M22

Braves

*because the other pro sports teams play in
Boston, but the Braves play in Atlanta*

M23

jade

because the others are birthstones

M24

9

*because the others are prime numbers, but
9 is divisible not only by 1 and itself, but
also by 3*

M25

Tom

because the others are first names of members of the Beatles: Paul McCartney, George Harrison, John Lennon

M26

Katrina

because the others are names of nuclear disasters, but Katrina is the name of the hurricane that wiped out New Orleans

M27

The Masters

because the others are three of the four Grand Slam championships in pro tennis, but The Masters is one of the four major championships in pro golf

M28

Katherine Hepburn

because the others are authors of children's books, but Katherine Hepburn was a movie star

M29

Lexington

because the others are American Civil War battles, but the Battle at Lexington triggered the American Revolutionary War

M30

Tomatoes and Moons

because the others are books by Dr. Seuss, but I made up Tomatoes and Moons

M31

cotton

because the other materials come from animals, but cotton comes from a plant

M32

Lotus

because the others are Italian automakers, but Lotus is an English automaker

M33

nylon

because the others are gases and elements on the periodic table, but nylon is synthetic and solid

M34

Stravinsky

because the others are Renaissance artists, but Igor Stravinsky was a 20th-century composer

M35

Spandex

because the others are trademarked/® names, but spandex (an anagram of "expands") is a non-trademarked/® name of a synthetic fiber

M36

steel

because the other metals are elements (on the periodic table), but steel is an alloy

M37

Groundhog Day

because Eddie Murphy starred in the other movies, but Bill Murray starred in Groundhog Day

M38

§

because the others are currency signs: ¥ (Japanese Yen), £ (British Pound), € (Euro) , but § is a section sign in a written text

M39

A.I. Artificial Intelligence

because the other movies were written and directed by James Cameron, but Steven Spielberg wrote and directed A.I.

M40

George Eliot

because the other 19th-century authors are men, but English novelist George Eliot, the pen name for Mary Ann Evans, is a woman

M41

Texas

because the others are avenues in Monopoly

M42

Uncle Tom's Cabin

because the other 19th-century American novels were written by Mark Twain, but Uncle Tom's Cabin was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe

M43

Van Buren

because the other US Presidents also served as Vice-President

M44

Batman Begins

because the other movies were made in 1939, "the greatest year in film history," but Batman Begins was made in 2005

M45

Walt Disney

because the others founded religions: Methodism (John Wesley), Mormonism (Joseph Smith), Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy)—but Walt Disney created cartoons and movies

M46

mandoline

because the others are musical instruments, but a mandoline (versus a mandolin) is a cook's tool used to slice and dice

M47

Barogue

because the others are red wine grapes, but Barogue is a white wine grape

M48

radish

because the others are botanical fruits (they have seeds) that we treat as culinary vegetables, but a seedless radish is a root vegetable

answer Tuesday

T1

storm

because the others end two-word nouns that start with "fishing": fishing line, fishing boat, fishing rod

T2

fiber

because the others end two-word nouns that start with "candy": candy apple, candy corn, candy cane

T3

stone

because the others end two-word nouns that start with "paper": paper clip, paper route, paper bag

T4

toe

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with "light": flashlight, backlight, moonlight

T5

whiskey

because the others end two-word nouns that start with "cotton": cotton mill, cotton candy, cotton gin

T6

night

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with "day": daydream, daylight, daytime

T7

trap

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with "fight": catfight, dogfight, gunfight

T8

kid

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with "sea": seaweed, seacoast, seaman

T9

peg

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with "thunder": thunderbolt, thunderbird, thundercloud

T10

fun

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with "snow": snowman, snowball, snowshoe

T11

plate

because the others start compound-word fruits that end in "berry": strawberry, blackberry, blueberry

T12

sail

because the others start compound-word animals that end in "hog": groundhog, hedgehog, warthog

T13

wave

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “board”: snowboard,
chalkboard, surfboard*

T14

sleek

*because the others end compound-word
nouns that start with “air”: airstream,
airspace, airspeed*

T15

blue

*because the others start two-word
vegetables that end in “bean”: green bean,
black bean, red bean*

T16

fence

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “seed”: birdseed,
flaxseed, hayseed*

T17

aqua

*because the other colors are warm, but
aqua is cool*

T18

dark

*because the others start compound-word
adjectives that end in “proof”: fireproof,
soundproof, lightproof*

T19

sad

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “weight”: paperweight,
deadweight, counterweight*

T20

poker

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “board”: chessboard,
skateboard, scoreboard*

T21

sing

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “mate”: teammate,
playmate, shipmate*

T22

sand

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end in “stage”: backstage,
downstage, soundstage*

T23

blend

*because the others end compound-word
foods that start with “ginger”: gingerbread,
gingersnap, gingerroot*

T24

word

*because the others start compound-word
nouns that end with “plate”: faceplate,
nameplate, bookplate*

T25

size

because the others start compound-word verbs that end with “date”: backdate, postdate, update

T26

out

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “mate”: inmate, housemate, helpmate

T27

ice

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “rain”: rainwater, rainbow, rainwear

T28

wire

because the others start compound-word adjectives that end with “proof”: foolproof, bombproof, crushproof

T29

planet

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “ship”: starship, steamship, battleship

T30

snow

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “out”: rainout, blackout, whiteout

T31

watch

because the others start two-word nouns that end with “strip”: drag strip, comic strip, landing strip

T32

fly

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “cat”: catnip, catwalk, catfish

T33

torn

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “work”: paperwork, masterwork, busywork

T34

land

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “sound”: soundboard, soundscape, soundstage

T35

tile

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “yard”: barnyard, brickyard, boatyard

T36

breeze

because the others start two-word nouns that end with “plate”: license plate, hot plate, home plate,

T37

crime

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “club”: nightclub, nighttime, nightshirt

T38

words

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “civil”: civil rights, civil marriage, civil law

T39

dryer

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “dish”: dishwasher, dishwater, dishrag

T40

chop

because the others start hyphenated-word adjectives that end with “rate”: third-rate, cut-rate, first-rate

T41

lamb

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “house”: storehouse, doghouse, farmhouse

T42

guard

because the others end hyphenated-word verbs that start with “fast”: fast-talk, fast-forward, fast-track

T43

leaf

because the others start compound-word adjectives that end with “worthy”: trustworthy, roadworthy, newsworthy

T44

bike

because the others start two- or three-word nouns that end with “drive”: disk drive, line drive, four-wheel drive

T45

tune

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “date”: airdate, playdate, update

T46

wood

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “side”: side chair, side dish, side street

T47

fly

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “yard”: shipyard, junkyard, churchyard

T48

traveler

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “court”: court order, court reporter, court tennis

answer Wednesday

W1

straw

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "top": top brass, top notch, top dog

W2

lead

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "silver": silver spoon, silver lining, silver bullet

W3

waffle

because the others end two-word foods that start with "Spanish": Spanish onion, Spanish rice, Spanish omelet

W4

winds

because the others end two-word idioms that start with a color: yellow streak, green light, blue skies

W5

tree

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "red": red carpet, red ink, red tape

W6

green

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms that describe people: salty dog, black sheep, early bird

W7

high

because the others start two-word idioms that end with "shot": cheap shot, big shot, last shot

W8

water

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "dead": dead duck, dead even, dead heat

W9

done

because the others start two-word idioms that end with body parts: cold feet, all ears, bare bones

W10

grass

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms that describe things you don't want: snake oil, rat race, kangaroo court

W11

Mansion

because the others end two-word names of national food-chains: Burger King, Pizza Hut, Cheesecake Factory

W12

tore

because the others start two-word money-related idioms: bottom dollar, red cent, plugged nickel

W13

weapon

because the others start compound-word places that end with “front”: lakefront, beachfront, battlefront

W14

wave

because the others start hyphenated-word verbs that end with “feed”: hand-feed, force-feed, spoon-feed

W15

pin

because the others start compound-word verbs that end with “write”: handwrite, skywrite, ghostwrite

W16

gear

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “match”: matchbox, matchstick, matchlock

W17

run

because the others start two-word types of dancers: line dancer, square dancer, lap dancer

W18

friend

because the others start compound-word nouns—figurative or literal—that end with “house”: nuthouse, guesthouse, henhouse

W19

chip

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “flash”: flash card, flash mob, flash flood

W20

bum

because the others start compound-word names for eccentric people that end with “ball”: screwball, oddball, goofball

W21

toad

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “fight”: fistfight, bullfight, prizefight

W22

café

because the others end compound-word nouns that start with “news”: newsprint, newswire, newswoman

W23

decision

because the others start two-word nouns that describe a type of man—figurative or literal: confidence man, straw man, front man

W24

beam

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “French”: French horn, French dressing, French fry

W25

type

because the others end two-word idioms that signal danger: thin ice, slippery slope, red flag

W26

fake

because the others end two-word idioms that start with a number: eleventh hour, seventh heaven, second fiddle

W27

oaths

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms that allude to things other than people: dog days, horse sense, cat nap

W28

sandy

because the others start two-word animal-related idioms that describe people: dark horse, dumb bunny, eager beaver

W29

cars

because the others end two-word idioms that start with a taste sensation: sweet tooth, sour grapes, bitter pill

W30

cushion

because the others end two-word idioms that describe empty messaging: double talk, hot air, lip service

W31

dollar

because the others start two-word animal-related idioms that describe people: guinea pig, lone wolf, road hog

W32

turtle

because the others start two-word idioms about relationships: blind date, broken heart, puppy love

W33

wait

because the others end or start two-word transport-related idioms that describe human actions: jump ship, pilot test, railroad someone

W34

gray

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms that describe human actions: wolf down, horse around, squirrel away

W35

muffin

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "cow": cow college, cow town, cow pie

W36

hatch

because the others start compound-word figurative descriptions of people that end with "bird": jailbird, snowbird, lovebird

W37

ceremony

because the others end two-word sports-related idioms that describe actions: bowl over, run interference, play ball

W38

tires

because the others end two-word idioms that describe what you get when you get fired: walking papers, pink slip, the boot

W39

atom

because the others end two-word body-related idioms that start with a color: blue blood, gray matter, green thumb

W40

ear

because the others start two-word animal-related idioms that describe human actions: weasel out, hoof it, rat on

W41

yogurt

because the others end two-word food-related idioms that describe people: bad apple, big cheese, top banana

W42

antler

because the others end two-word idioms that describe human actions: cry wolf, turn tail, play possum

W43

seat

because the others start or end two-word food-related idioms that describe cushy living: free lunch, gravy train, meal ticket

W44

steer

because the others start short sports-related idioms (nouns): left field, homestretch, heavyweight

W45

zebras

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms that describe goofy things: horse feathers, white elephant, monkey business

W46

worked

because the others start short idioms that end with “gun”: under the gun, smoking gun, jump the gun

W47

cereal

because the others end two-word food-related idioms that start with a nationality: Belgian waffle, Canadian bacon, French toast

W48

claw

because the others end two-word cat-related idioms that mean “excellent”: cat’s pajamas, cat’s meow, cat’s whiskers

TH1

lamp

because the others end three-word stock phrases that refer to game actions: shoot the moon, roll the dice, spin the bottle

TH2

rake

because the others end three-word idioms (euphemisms) for “die”: kick the bucket, bite the dust, give up the ghost

TH3

miffed

because the others start four-word animal-related idioms that describe people: quiet as a mouse, scared as a rabbit, sick as a dog

TH4

tart

because the others end three-word idioms that describe where you might find yourself: up a creek, out to lunch, on the fence

TH5

napkin

because the others end four-word animal-related idioms that describe something you might have: frog in your throat, bee in your bonnet, monkey on your back

TH6

flows

because the others end sports-related idioms about ways to move forward: roll with the punches, swim with the tide, carry the ball

TH7

mules

because the others are part of idioms that say, “Slow down—be patient”: cool your heels, hold your horses, keep your pants on

TH8

bone

because the others end three-word idioms about chatting (or gossip) that start with “chew”: chew the fat, chew the cud, chew the rag

TH9

church

because the others start two-word animal-related idioms that describe types of people: sacred cow, black sheep, night owl

TH10

black

because the others end idioms that describe actions that start with “paint”: paint the town red, paint yourself into a corner, paint a rosy (or gloomy) picture

TH11

fuzzy

because the others start four-word animal-related idioms that describe people: strong as an ox, stubborn as a mule, sly as a fox

TH12

gloves

because the others end idioms about actions that start with “walk”: walk a fine line, walk a mile in someone’s shoes, walk a tightrope

TH13

ball

because the others end four-word animal-related idioms that describe people: blind as a bat, gentle as a lamb, nervous as a cat

TH14

side

because the others end idioms that start with “water”: water under the bridge, water over the damn, water off a duck’s back

TH15

cooking

because the others end idioms that describe things that are easy or likely to be easy: piece of cake, walk in the park, smooth sailing

TH16

toaster

because the others end three-word idioms that describe things you might have to suck it up and do: bury the hatchet, bite the bullet, face the music

TH17

hate

because the others are part of horse-related idioms about eating or hunger: I’m so hungry I could eat a horse; I’m as hungry as a horse; I ate like a horse

TH18

night

because the others are part of the idiom “a day late and a dollar short”

TH19

wings

because the others end idioms that refer to totality and start with the words “the whole”: the whole ball of wax, the whole shooting match, the whole nine yards

TH20

angle

because the others end mixed-bag idioms signaling things you might not want to do: bark up the wrong tree, pass the buck, jump the gun

TH21

dune

because the others end animal-related idioms that describe ways you can feel or behave—“like a . . .”: fish out of water, cat on a hot tin roof, bull in a china shop

TH22

bobs

because the others are part of the idiom “keep something at arm’s length”

TH23

pink

because the others are intermediate colors (a mix of equal parts of a primary and a secondary color): magenta (red + purple), chartreuse (yellow + green), marigold (yellow + orange)—but pink is a mixture of red and white

TH24

cherry

because the others end nationality-related idioms that describe things that spell trouble: China syndrome, Mexican standoff, more holes than Swiss cheese

TH25

tired

because the others start four-word animal-related idioms that describe a person’s condition: drunk as a skunk, fat as a pig, happy as a clam

TH26

sand

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “light”: limelight, skylight, headlight

TH27

dance

because the others start compound-word nouns that end with “wright”: wheelwright, shipwright, playwright

TH28 9^3

because the others are or represent irrational numbers: π (pi: 3.14159 . . .), $\sqrt{2}$ (square root of 2: 1.41421 . . .), ϕ (phi—the golden ratio: 1.61803 . . .); but 9^3 is rational (729).

TH29

sip

because the others start compound-word adjectives that end with “worthy”: airworthy, crashworthy, praiseworthy

TH30

steam

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “French”: French door, French cuff, French bean

TH31

chair

because the others start two-word food-related idioms that describe people in unflattering ways: bad egg, couch potato, cold fish

TH32

burp

because the others end three-word idioms that describe actions that start with “take”: take a punch, take a nosedive, take a raincheck

TH33

Tadpole

because the others are names of full moons: Sturgeon Moon (August), Harvest Moon (September or October), Beaver Moon (November)—but Tadpole is the name of a galaxy

TH34

sad

because the others end idioms that describe actions that could disrupt the status quo: rock the boat, open a can of worms, upset the apple-cart

TH35

sad

because the others end idioms that start with “red”: red cent, red letter day, red light district

TH36

beet

because the others end food-related idioms that describe things you don’t want to do: be in a pickle, lay an egg, cry over spilled milk

TH37

raspberry

because the others end success-tip idioms: keep an ace up your sleeve, burn the candle at both ends, stay cool as a cucumber

TH38

logs

because the others end mixed-bag idioms that describe how to make things worse or make trouble: add insult to injury, fan the flames, stir up a hornet’s nest

TH39

dipped

because the others end body-related idioms about staying alert: stay on your toes, keep your eyes peeled, keep your ear to the ground

TH40

brine

because the others end body-related idioms about surviving financially: keep the wolf from the door, keep your head above water, tighten your belt

TH41

viceroi

because the others are punctuation marks:

¶ (pilcrow), / (solidus), ! (bang)

TH42

puddle

because the others start or end horse-

related idioms that describe actions: beat

a dead horse, chomp at the bit, get back in the saddle

TH43

whip

because the others end moisture-related

idioms advising that you avoid people who:

are a wet blanket, rain on your parade,

hang you out to dry

TH44

donut

because the others end mixed-bag idioms

that describe someone who's crazy or

eccentric: nutty as a fruitcake, bats in the

belfry, not playing with a full deck

TH45

bottoms

because the others are part of success-tip

idioms that start with "don't bite": don't bite

the hand that feeds you; don't bite off more

than you can chew; don't bite somebody's

head off

TH46

down

because the others end animal-related

idioms about wise things to do: get the

monkey off your back, get your ducks in a

row, get off your high horse

TH47

grinds

because the others end mixed-bag idioms

that describe how to make a bad situation

worse: add fuel to the fire, twist the knife,

pour salt in the wounds

TH48

rake

because the others end card-related idioms

that describe strategies: call a spade a

spade, put your cards on the table, play

your cards close to your chest

TH49

wilts

because the others end idioms that

describe ways to fly (or not to fly): fly off the

handle, fly by the seat of your pants, fly the

coop

TH50

grobe

because the others end idioms that refer to

an actual "fly": fly in the ointment, fly on the

wall, wouldn't hurt a fly

TH51

To the Lighthouse

because the other novels were written by William Faulkner, but To the Lighthouse was written by Virginia Woolf

TH52

Annie Hall

because the other Woody Allen movies were shot in black and white

TH53

aim

because the others are part of animal-related idioms that describe exaggerations and end in "story": cock-and-bull story, shaggy dog story, fish story

TH54

John Young

because the other Apollo astronauts walked on the moon (three of 12 to do so), but John Young is one of 29 who didn't

TH55

Monet

because the others are Post-Impressionist artists, but Monet was an Impressionist

TH56

Q

because the others stand for the three primary colors used in four-color CMYK printing, where K stands for black: C (Cyan), M (Magenta), Y (Yellow)

TH57

Black

because the other seas are landlocked

TH58

Snoopy

because the others are famous men named John

TH59

Sunset Scotch Fig

because the others are kinds of potatoes

TH60

Jennifer Bartlett

because the other women artists were/architects, but Bartlett is a painter

F1

swat

because the others are part of idioms that describe actions that end with “bacon”: save my bacon, bring home the bacon, use language that would fry bacon

F2

petal

because the others end animal-related idioms indicating that things aren’t the same: different kettle of fish, horse of a different color, different breed of cat

F3

smokes

because the others end mixed-bag proverbs advising, “You can’t ...”: You can’t make a silk purse from a sow’s ear; You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs; You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink

F4

truck

because the others end two-word nouns that describe things that start with “Virginia”: Virginia pine, Virginia fence, Virginia ham

F5

Monday

because the others end mixed-bag idioms that start with “six”: six ways from Sunday, six feet under, six of one and half-a-dozen of the other

F6

swing

because the others end mixed-bag idioms that start with “take”: take someone to the cleaners, take someone to the woodshed, take someone under your wing

F7

create

because the others end mixed-bag idioms advising, “Don’t let something ...”: get lost in the shuffle, slip through the cracks, get swept under the carpet

F8

seem

because the others end two-word nouns that start with “French”: French curve, French press, French seam

F9

eights

because the others end idioms that say “everything”: whole kit and caboodle, whole nine yards, whole ball of wax

F10

shame

because the others end two-word idioms that start with “Dutch”: Dutch courage, Dutch treat, Dutch wife

F11

group

because the others end money-starting proverbs: Money doesn't grow on trees; Money makes the world go round; Money is the root of all evil

F12

pipe

because the others end horse-related imperative proverbs: Don't look a gift horse in the mouth; Don't change horses in mid-stream; Don't put the cart before the horse

F13

glue

because the others end mixed-bag idioms saying, "You're independent—you ...": march to a different drummer, swim against the tide, aren't cut from the same cloth

F14

windy

because the others end or start chip-related idioms: a chip off the old block, a chip on your shoulder, bargaining chip

F15

muff

because the others start or end bait-related idioms: fish or cut bait, take the bait, bait and switch

F16

leaf times

because the others start or end apple-related idioms: sure as God made little green apples, comparing apples and oranges, how do you like them apples!

F17

low-grade

because the others end idioms that start with a nationality: Mexican wave, Danish pastry, Chinese fire drill

F18

splint

because the others are part of success-tip idioms: don't let them pull the wool over your eyes; don't let them pull the rug out from under you; don't let them pull the plug

F19

mine

because the others end or start bull-related idioms: take the bull by the horns, hit the bull's-eye, shoot the bull

F20

tights

because the others start or end chips-related idioms: let the chips fall where they may, when the chips are down, in the chips

F21

roasts

*because the others end apple-related**proverbs: The apple doesn't fall far from the tree; One bad apple spoils the barrel; A bad tree does not yield good apples***F22**

Buck

*because the other full moons occur during winter months (in the Northern Hemisphere): Long Nights Moon (December), Wolf Moon (January), Snow Moon (February)—but Buck Moon occurs in July***F23**

soapstone

*because the others end two-word names of nouns that start with a state: Texas night-hawk, Georgia peach, Virginia ham***F24**

vermilion

*because the others are tertiary colors (a mix of equal parts of two secondary colors): olive (green + orange), slate (green + purple), russet (purple + orange)—but vermilion is an intermediate color (equal parts primary red + secondary orange)***F25**

Triton

*because the other moons are Jupiter's, but Triton is Neptune's***F26**

weed

*because the others end two-word idioms that start with a material: iron fist, velvet glove, glass ceiling***F27**

stop

*because the others start card-related idioms: lost in the shuffle, force my hand, deal me in***F28**

moose

*because the others end or start animal-related proverbs: Every dog has his day; Curiosity killed the cat; What's good for the goose is good for the gander***F29**

bees

*because the others end success-tip idioms: don't let them cut you off at the knees; don't let them stack the deck; don't take it lying down***F30**

glove

because the others start or end dog-related idioms: dog-eat-dog, dog and pony show, tail wags the dog

F31

lettuce

*because the others end tip-related idioms:
tip of the iceberg, on the tip of my tongue,
tip your hand*

F32

oatmeal

*because the others end animal-related
success-tip idioms: Don't let the fox guard
the henhouse; Don't back the wrong horse;
Don't go hog-wild*

F33

folder

*because the others end idioms about
revealing a secret: come out of the closet,
let the cat out of the bag, spill the beans*

F34

job

*because the others start or end body-related
idioms: pay through the nose, take it on the
chin, break a leg*

F35

dusts

*because the others are part of mixed-bag
familiar sayings that advise, "Beware!":
Beware of Greeks bearing gifts (proverb);
Let the buyer beware (proverb); Beware of
wolves in sheep's clothing*

F36

skip

*because the others end proverbs about
man: No man is an island; Man does not
live by bread alone; A good man is hard to
find*

F37

blank

*because the others end idioms about being
in a tough place: between a rock and a hard
place, hanging by a thread, back against the
wall*

F38

oboe

*because the others end music-related
idioms: toot your own horn, play second
fiddle, march to the beat of your own drum*

F39

tropic

*because the others end three-word idioms
(euphemisms) for "dead": promoted to
glory (Salvation Army), pushing up daisies,
six feet under*

F40

trot

*because the others end animal-related
proverbs about avoiding missteps: Don't
look a gift horse in the mouth; Don't cast
your pearls before swine; Don't count your
chickens before they hatch*

F41

grab

because the others end idioms about keeping something a secret or hidden: keep it under your hat; don't let the cat out of the bag; don't breathe a word

F42

pine

because the others are part of teeth-ending idioms: a kick in the teeth, armed to the teeth, by the skin of your teeth

F43

hoof

because the others end skin-related idioms: no skin off my nose, makes my skin crawl, gets under my skin

F44

organ

because the others end idioms about resigning to or accepting the consequences of some wrongdoing: face the music, fall on your sword, pay the piper

F45

spy

because the others end proverbs based on human-made physical objects: A picture paints a thousand words; A chain is only as strong as its weakest link; Good fences make good neighbors

F46

tipsy

because the others end proverbs about woman: A woman's place is in the home; Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned; Behind every great man there's a great woman

F47

Perseus

because the other characters of Greek mythology take part in the legend of the Minotaur and the labyrinth on the island of Crete—but Perseus, the Greek hero who killed Medusa, played roles in other myths

F48

cafe

because the others end proverbs that offer hot advice: Strike while the iron is hot; Fight fire with fire; If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen

F49

ties

because the others end sports-related idioms (boxing, pool, baseball) about being in a jam: on the ropes, behind the eight ball, down to the last out

F50

asphalt

because the others end two-word stock phrases (the first two are idioms, the third a culinary specialty) that start with a nationality: Dutch uncle, French leave, Belgian waffle

NOTE: When you hit F50—the quartet from the show *Columbo* that triggered the creation of *Misfitz Because*—I hope you felt prepped for success, confident because of the lateral-thinking devices that you learned along the way. Imagine tackling that puzzle cold—as I did! I remember feeling so stumped. So clueless. Like a giraffe in water.

But after devising many problem sets of my own and seeking to define clear rules for the game, I now think that the design of that F50 quartet has a Swiss cheese feel: F50's got some holes in it. "Dutch uncle" and "French leave" are figurative expressions. But "Belgian waffle"? Belgian waffle is literal not figurative and therefore throws a monkey wrench into the mix. Sure, all three phrases begin with a nationality—so on one level: OK. But what about these other hiccups? A waffle is food. But "uncle," "leave," and "asphalt"? Nope. They are not food. So "waffle" is the misfit! Or you could say that the idiom "asphalt jungle," which refers to the city, is figurative, so "asphalt" groups cogently with the figurative idioms associated with "uncle" and "leave"—again making "waffle" the misfit. A well-designed quartet has only one best answer.

I've tried to avoid such kinks when designing problem sets for this book, regulating my choices fairly strictly by precise categorizations. For example, I've rejected problem sets that would put "flash card" and "flash mob" (both two-word nouns) with "flash back" (a two-word verb) or "flashback" (a one-word noun). Or would put "rain out" (a two-word verb) with "rain date" (a two-word noun) or "rainbow" (a compound-word noun). Or would put "screwball" and "oddball" (both compound-word figurative descriptions—of eccentric people) with "baseball" (a compound-word literal description—of a game or physical thing).

However, not wanting to over-legislate the game and wanting to keep it fun—!—I do relax the rules here and there (especially for the potpourri of Sunday puzzles). I follow *Columbo*'s lead. I sometimes mix the figurative and the literal, verbs and nouns, compound words and double words, idioms and proverbs. Through Wednesday's puzzles, I'm fairly rigorous about keeping the idioms to two words and making sure the word-lengths of idioms in a particular puzzle match. But starting with Thursday's puzzles, when the idioms get longer, the word-lengths of idioms in a particular puzzle might vary—though when the word-lengths do match, a puzzle gains an extra dimension of precision.

So consider my take on all of this grist for the mill as you create your own blend of precise or relaxed "design rules" for the *Misfitz Because* puzzles that you devise for family and friends.

S1

next

because the others end idiomatic ways to say (euphemisms for) “die”: get your ticket punched, meet your Maker, breathe your last

S2

joke

because the others start two-, three-, and four-word idioms that end with a nationality: go Dutch, pardon my French, slow boat to China

S3

wax

because the others are slang names for money

S4

flashlight

because the others end two-word nouns that start with French: French bread, French bulldog, French chalk

S5

olive

because the others are quarternary colors (a mix of equal parts of two tertiary colors): buff (olive + russet), sage (olive + slate), plum (russet + slate)—but olive is a tertiary color (a mix of equal parts of two secondary colors: green + orange)

S6

work

because the others are part of fire-related proverbs: Where there's smoke, there's fire; If you play with fire, you get burned; Fight fire with fire

S7

spied

because the others start or end goose-related idioms: wild goose chase, silly as a goose, his goose is cooked

S8

heaven

because the others end idioms that say, “No way! Never”: when hell freezes over, on a cold day in hell, when pigs fly

S9

meal

because the others end idioms that start with “cry”: cry over spilt milk, cry all the way to the bank, cry wolf

S10

think

because the others end animal-related proverbs about being set in your ways: You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink; A leopard doesn't change its spots; You can't teach an old dog new tricks

S11

guard

because the others start idioms that end with “wind”: throw caution to the wind, whistle in the wind, twist in the wind

S12

height

because the others end body-related idioms about doing things just in time or barely: by a hair’s breadth, by a whisker, by the skin of your teeth

S13

pins

because the others end mixed-bag idioms about how you can do things: by the seat of your pants, by hook or by crook, by/through the back door

S14

claw

because the others end two-word idioms that start with a nationality: Dutch auction, Chinese walls, Indian file

S15

snails

because the others end advice-idioms based on animals and containers: don’t buy a pig in a poke; don’t let the cat out of the bag; don’t open a can of worms

S16

time

because the others end familiar sayings that involve transport: where the rubber meets the road, whatever floats your boat; The squeaky wheel gets the oil (proverb)

S17

tops

because the others start familiar sayings that involve home: nothing to write home about, keep the home fires burning; The longest way round is the shortest way home (proverb)

S18

confound

because the others end familiar sayings about consequences: What goes around comes around (proverb); You reap what you sow (proverb); you can’t unring a bell

S19

slippers

because the others are part of imperative proverbs that use violent imagery: Don’t bite the hand that feeds you; Don’t cut off your nose to spite your face; Don’t burn your bridges behind you

S20

sheep

because the others end imperative proverbs involving vessels—bottles, basket, bath (bathtub): Don’t put new wine into old bottles; Don’t put all your eggs in one basket; Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water

S21

point

because the others start idioms about actions that backfire: blow up in your face, shoot yourself in the foot, hoist by your own petard

S22

except

because the others end horse-related familiar sayings that advise: don't beat a dead horse; don't horse around; Don't look a gift horse in the mouth (proverb)

S23

summer

because the others end two-word idioms that start with "Irish": Irish tan, Irish twins, Irish handshake

S24

weather

because the others end mixed-bag idioms about folks who are similar: two peas in a pod, cut from the same cloth, birds of a feather

S25

riot

because the others are part of mixed-bag idioms warning that bad actions have consequences: you've made your bed, now lie in it; you'll have the devil to pay; your chickens will come home to roost

S26

drizzle

because the others end proverbs based on nature: A rolling stone gathers no moss; Every cloud has a silver lining; Faith can move mountains

S27

dog

because the others end cat-related familiar sayings: while the cat's away, the mouse will play; There's more than one way to skin a cat (proverb); A cat may look at the king (proverb)

S28

back

because the others are last words of mixed-bag idiomatic ways to say "forever!": until the cows come home, untill you're blue in the face, until hell freezes over

S29

private

because the others are last words of household-idioms advising how to dodge scandal: keep your skeletons in your closet; don't wash your dirty linen in public; sweep it under the carpet

S30

me

because the others end familiar food-related sayings that offer schmooze advice: know which side your bread is buttered; Don't bite the hand that feeds you (proverb); You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar (proverb)

S31

Wednesdays

because the others are words of mixed-bag idioms that refer to long periods of time: a month of Sundays, a dog's age, a coon's age

S32

autumn

because the others form two-word idioms that start with a nationality: Chinese whispers, Spanish practices, Indian summer

S33

trap

because the others end familiar sayings that include the word "bury": bury your head in the sand, bury yourself in your work; Let the dead bury the dead (a proverb)

S34

reveals

because the others are last words of elephant-idioms: elephant in the room, elephant test, an elephant never forgets

S35

toad

because the others are part of idioms that end with "water": like a duck to water, spend money like water, pour oil on troubled water(s)

S36

rash

because the others end pound-related proverbs: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; Penny wise and pound foolish; In for a penny, in for a pound

S37

lesson

because the others end love-related proverbs: Love is blind; It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all; Absence makes the heart grow fonder

S38

make

because the others start idioms about things you really don't want to do: tilt at windmills, run around like a chicken with its head cut off, dig your own grave

S39

sails

because the others end tide-related proverbs: Time and tide wait for no man; A rising tide lifts all boats; There is a tide in the affairs of men

S40

cook

because the others start proverbs about the Anglo-Saxon work ethic: A stitch in time saves nine; The early bird catches the worm; Procrastination is the thief of time

S41

grow

*because the others end lines of the poem
“Monday’s Child”: Monday’s child is fair
of face; Tuesday’s child is full of grace;
Wednesday’s child is full of woe*

S42

Elizabeth

*because the others are types of fences:
worm fence, snake fence, Virginia fence*

S43

Sirius

*because the others are stars in the
constellation Orion: Mintaka, Betelgeuse,
Rigel*

S44

Strawberry

*because the others are various names of
the full moon that occurs in April: Pink
Moon, Sprouting Grass Moon, Egg Moon—
but Strawberry Moon refers to the full moon
that occurs in June*

S45

corn fields

*because the other three appear in the first
line of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby:
“In my younger and more vulnerable years
my father gave me some advice that I’ve
been turning over in my mind ever since.”*

S46

sky

*because the others, when preceded by a
material, form lyrics of the 1933 popular
song “It’s Only a Paper Moon”: paper moon,
cardboard sea, muslin tree*

S47

Pegasus

*because the others are naked-eye galaxies,
but Pegasus is a constellation and star*

S48

steamboat

*because the others end everyday phrases
(idioms) from Shakespeare: as dead as a
doornail, in the twinkling of an eye, wear
your heart on your sleeve*

S49

tulips

*because the others end everyday phrases
from the Bible: A broken heart, A sign of
the times, Pride goes before a fall*

S50

berries

*because the others end idioms about
things good to know: know which way the
wind blows, know where all the bodies are
buried, know more about something than a
frog about bedsheets*

S51

Portland, OR

because as of 2011 the other cities are where US Presidents were born

S52

peach

because the other ancient fruits were first domesticated in the Middle East, but the peach was domesticated in China

S53

cast

because the others are part of chicken-related idioms: if it ain't feathers it's chickens, go to bed with the chickens, no spring chicken

S54

Eakins

because the other American artists are 20th-century abstract painters, but Eakins was a 19th-century American realist painter

S55

Brown Swiss

because the others are dairy and beef cows, but Brown Swiss is only dairy

S56

Knicks

because the others are 3-0 choke teams: three of the four North American pro sports teams as of 2011 to blow a 3-0 postseason-series lead

S57

colophon

because the others are punctuation marks: ÷ (obelus), ? (erote me), @ asperand—but a colophon is a publisher's emblem

S58

Joe Morello

because the other musicians played on the 1959 classic Miles Davis album Kind of Blue, but drummer Joe Morello played on the 1959 classic album Time Out (with Dave Brubeck)

S59

thistle

because the others are cloud names—translations of their Latin roots: heap (cumulus), layer (stratus), rain (nimbus)

S50

llama

because the other large land mammals are not indigenous to South America

answer Sunday

SN1

tips

because the others end three-word idioms about sleep: hit the sack, catch some Zs, catch forty winks

SN2

shy

because the others end chicken-related idioms: chicken feed, no spring chicken, chicken-hearted

SN3

winter

because the others end arm-related idioms: an arm and a leg, with open arms, at arm's length

SN4

belt

because the others form card-related idioms that describe actions: follow suit, up the ante, stack the deck

SN5

toad

because the others end mixed-bag words-to-the-wise idioms: Don't put the cart before the horse; Don't scatter your fire; Don't wake a sleeping giant

SN6

hammer

because the others are weapons in Clue

SN7

cow

because the others end high-related idioms: high time, high horse, high and mighty

SN8

book

because the others end four-word animal-related idioms about things you really don't want to have: butterflies in your stomach, bats in the belfry, ants in your pants

SN9

frown

because the others end three-word cook-related idioms: cook your goose, cook the books, cook something up

SN10

Apache

because the others are Native Americans indigenous to the East Coast, but the Apache are indigenous to the Southwest

SN11

juice

because the others end two-word familiar foods that start with a nationality: French bread, English tea, Spanish omelette

SN12

sail

because the others end bite-related idioms: bite off more than you can chew, bite the bullet, bite your tongue

SN13

fire escapes

because the others end idioms that start with an animal and signal danger or a problem: canary in a coal mine, deer in the headlights, fly in the ointment

SN14

April

because the others end idioms that say, "Talk about slowwww!": slower than molasses going uphill in January, like watching grass grow, like watching paint dry

SN15

tough books

because the others end crook- or crooked-related idioms (signaling dishonesty): crooked as a dog's hind leg, crooked as a barrel of fish hooks, by hook or by crook

SN16

down

because the others end four-word "calm down" idioms: don't blow your top, don't blow a fuse, keep your shirt on!

SN17

eye

because the others end ball-related sports-idioms: get the ball rolling, the ball is in your court, keep your eye on the ball

SN18

}

because the others are punctuation marks: @ (asperand), # (hash or pound sign), † (dagger)—but } is a math symbol (integral)

SN19

cornet

because the others are reed instruments, but cornet is a brass instrument

SN20

tied

because the others end four-word idioms about how to press forward to positive outcomes: keep your chin up, keep your fingers crossed, keep your nose clean

SN21

broom

because the others end four-word animals-in-something idioms: elephant in the room, snake in the grass, bird in the hand (is worth two in the bush)

SN22

stew

because the others end compound words that figuratively say “crazy”: crackpot, nutcase, fruitcake

SN23

kiss

because the others end breathe-related idioms: breathe your last, breathe down your neck, don’t breathe a word

SN24

cod

because the others end “like an animal” idioms: like a bat out of hell, like a beached whale, like a moth to a flame

SN25

toads

because the others end throw-related idioms: throw someone to the wolves, throw cold water on something, throw one’s weight around

SN26

lights

because the others end smoke-related idioms: smoke signals, smoke and mirrors, smoke-filled room

SN27

drone

because the others end idioms that refer to long periods of time: in a month of Sundays, in a coon’s age, until the cows come home

SN28

hammock

because the others end throw-related idioms: throw a monkey wrench into the works, throw caution to the winds (or wind), throw down the gauntlet

SN29

fork

because the others end familiar sayings that include “seven”: seven-year itch; at sixes and sevens; one year’s seeds, seven year’s weeds

SN30

bulbs

because the others end four-word idioms that start with “hot”: hot off the press, hot under the collar, hot on your heels

SN31

fire

because the others end hold-related

idioms: hold the fort, hold your nose, don't hold your breath

SN32

dive

because the others start idioms that end

with "mill": grist for the mill, put me through the mill, run-of-the-mill

SN33

breaks

because the others end hot-related idioms:

sell like hotcakes, too hot to handle, in the hot seat

SN34

How Green Was My Valley

because the other John Ford films were

made in 1939, but Ford made How Green Was My Valley in 1941

SN35

robs

because the others end dessert-related

idioms: brownie points, pie in the sky, just dessert

SN36

tv

because the others are part of idioms that

end with "fire": several irons in the fire, set the world on fire, get on like a house on fire

SN37

lakes

because the others end household-related

familiar sayings: come out of the woodwork, get out of bed on the wrong side; A watched pot never boils (proverb)

SN38

Carnations

because the others end movie titles: Please

Don't Eat the Daisies, Days of Wine and Roses, Send Me No Flowers

SN39

tree

because the others end two-word idioms

that start with "white": white elephant, white knight, white lie

SN40

grease

because the others are part of idioms that

end with "fly": make the fur fly, feathers fly, sparks fly

SN41

pipes

because the others end “ing” action-idioms: skating on thin ice, cooking with gas, spinning your wheels

SN42

cougar

because the others end idioms coined by Shakespeare: night owl, wild goose chase, in a pickle

SN43

Yo-Yo Ma

because the others are on the Golden Record aboard Voyager spacecrafts 1 and 2 launched in 1977

SN44

acorn

because the others end trouble-spot idioms: at the end of your rope, up a tree, at wit’s end

SN45

road

because the others start or end feather-related idioms about things not usually good to do: tar and feather, feather your own nest, ruffle someone’s feathers

SN46

llama

because the others end two-word animal-related idioms about useless or undesirable things: dead horse, white elephant, pink giraffe

SN47

drop

because the others end household-related idioms about stuff you don’t want to do: get your fingers burnt; get caught with your hand in the cookie jar; jump from the frying pan into the fire

SN48

umbrella

because the others end five-word liquid-related idioms with biblical origins: a drop in the bucket, a fly in the ointment, wash your hands of something

SN49

dawn

because the others are part of familiar sayings advising, “Slow down”: Don’t try to walk before you can crawl (proverb); Don’t cross that bridge till you come to it (proverb); don’t jump the gun

SN50

napkin

because the others are part of hell-related idioms: going to hell in a handbasket, not a snowball’s chance in hell, come hell or high water

SN51

grate

because the others start three-word tide-related idioms: stem the tide, turn the tide, tide somebody over

SN52

jack

because the others end fish-related idioms: bigger fish to fry, a big fish in a small pond, like shooting fish in a barrel

SN53

type

because the others end smoke-related idioms: smoke and mirrors, where there's smoke there's fire, put that in your pipe and smoke it!

SN54

Worm

because the others are names of galaxies: Cigar Galaxy, Cartwheel Galaxy, Sunflower Galaxy—but Worm is the name of the March full moon

SN55

break

because the others start aggravation-to-body-parts idioms: pain in the neck, thorn in my side, kick in the teeth

SN56

shortstop

because the others are part of idioms that include days of the week: thank God it's Friday, six ways to Sunday, Monday morning quarterback

SN57

Gertrude Stein

because the other female authors used pen names: Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), Emily Brontë (Ellis Bell), Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen)

SN58

storm

because the others are part of the idiom, "Loose lips sink ships"

SN59

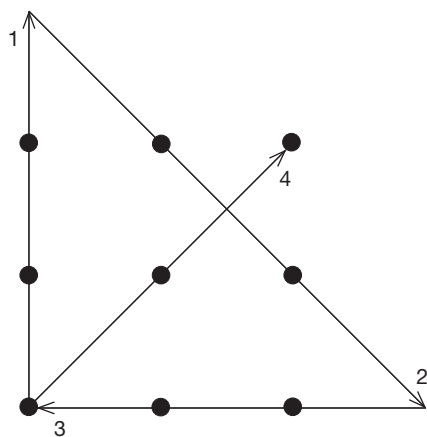
drive

because the others start wind-related idioms: take the wind out of your sails, spitting into the wind, tilting at windmills

SN60

Ellery Queen

because the other male pen names refer to individuals: Charles Dodgson, Samuel Clemens, Richard Bachman—but Ellery Queen refers to cousins and coauthors Daniel Nathan and Manfred Lepofsky



Answer to “TEST 2” on page 12.



ARTIST ELIOT PLUM created this book when he lived in New England, where he spent as much time as possible at the ocean, keeping track of the tides . . . and the three phases of twilight.

Now he lives in California, where he dares not fly too close to the sun.

